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ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency problems and ways to improve youth services were explored in a survey conducted in 1975 in 15 East Tennessee counties surrounding Knoxville. The 51 persons interviewed were associated with law enforcement, judicial, and counseling services; respondents believed that juvenile delinquency was on the increase in rural areas and that offenses among younger age groups were becoming more common. Crimes of violence were not mentioned so often as breaking and entering, theft, drug problems, and status offenses. Problems in the home environment, including family breakups, financial difficulties, and weak parental guidance and control, were most often cited as the main causes of delinquency. Lack of recreational facilities, limited job outlets, changing social values and peer pressures were also mentioned as contributing factors. When asked to evaluate nine kinds of programs used to tackle delinquency problems, respondents listed professional counseling and probation services, temporary detention facilities, and recreational outlets as the areas most often needing improvement at the local level. Funding, problems in gaining public acceptance of new ideas, and difficulties in finding qualified people to handle localized programs were mentioned as obstacles to improving youth services. Decentralizing juvenile services by pooling facilities among localities is discussed and costs are examined as well as other considerations. (Author/DS)

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RURAL JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: PROBLEMS & NEEDS IN EAST TENNESSEE

William Dan Bolton • David W. Brown

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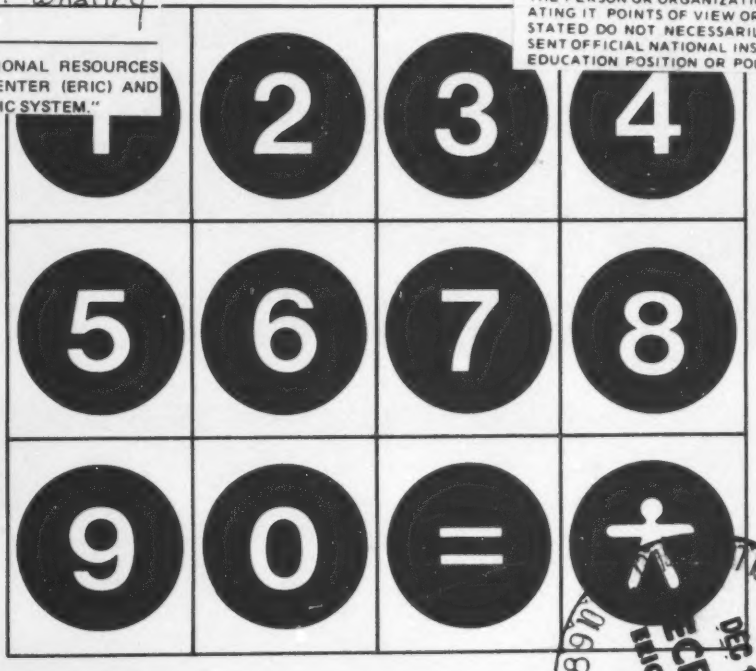

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ABSTRACT

Results of an exploratory study of delinquency problems and possibilities for improving juvenile services in 15 nonmetropolitan counties surrounding Knoxville are presented. A 1975 survey of 51 persons with law enforcement, judicial, and counseling agencies in these counties suggests that there is concern about rising delinquency rates, behavioral problems among younger youths, underlying problems in youths' family environments, and lack of creative outlets and professional helps for juveniles in rural counties. Respondents' feelings about the merits and limitations of nine types of youth services and facilities are summarized. Use of budgeted cost estimates and a tradeoff framework to assess decentralized approaches for upgrading juvenile services is demonstrated. Also highlighted are problems of inconsistency in defining "delinquency," needs for better local understanding about some proposed juvenile services, felt-needs for more training and professional help, and inadequacies of existing data about delinquency patterns and program costs.

KEY WORDS

Juvenile delinquency. Rural areas. Tennessee. Local problems and trends. Juvenile justice systems. Delinquency prevention and rehabilitation. Decentralized youth services. Estimated costs. Decision-making considerations.

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This study was conducted in informal cooperation with several human and community service agencies, as one of a series of studies related to the socioeconomics of living services in rural Tennessee. Though this should not imply their endorsement of this report, appreciation is expressed to officials in the Tennessee Department of Correction (especially Mike Harkleroad and John Clabo in the Knoxville regional office), the Tennessee Law Enforcement Planning Agency (especially Brenda Pendergrass and Linda O'Neal), and the East Tennessee Development District (especially Morris Best), who provided background information, suggested useful study approaches and contacts, and helped to interpret results.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to the law enforcement officers, judges, juvenile counselors, program administrators, and others at local and regional levels who consented to be interviewed. They provided valuable insights about rural delinquency problems, community attitudes, program needs and possibilities, and cost items that have to be taken into account.

Thanks are extended also to Jean Brown, Chairman of the Tennessee Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee, for suggestions as the study proceeded.

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SUMMARY

An exploratory study of juvenile delinquency problems and some ways to improve youth services in rural areas was conducted in 15 East Tennessee counties surrounding metropolitan Knoxville. Fifty-one persons concerned with delinquency at local and multi-county levels were interviewed in 1975. They included law enforcement personnel, judges, probation workers, mental health counselors, and school officials. Additional persons were contacted as sources of estimates about costs of basing certain services in outlying counties.

Survey respondents believed that juvenile delinquency was on the increase in rural areas and that offenses among younger age groups were becoming more common. Crimes of violence were not mentioned so often as breaking and entering, theft, drug problems, and status offenses. It was believed that many of the delinquency problems stemmed from problems in the home environment—family breakups, financial difficulties, and weak parental guidance and control. Lack of recreational facilities, limited job outlets, changing social values, peer pressures, and other factors in the broader community environment were mentioned too.

Most counties were making considerable use of state juvenile institutions. Court officials disliked sending away youths who had not committed serious or frequent offenses, but this was sometimes necessary because specialized facilities and professional services were not locally available. For less serious cases, most judges were trying the use of warnings, probation and related counseling services, and other approaches which did not remove the youth from their home localities.

Survey respondents were asked to rate existing counseling services, recreational facilities, job opportunities, and educational facilities for youth. Counties with large towns tended to receive "good" or "very good" ratings, but the more rural counties tended to be rated as only "fair." Juvenile services most often mentioned as needing improvement at local levels were: professional counseling and probation services, temporary detention facilities, and recreational outlets.

People in the outlying rural counties preferred that juvenile services be provided locally, though they realized that this would not always be feasible and that collaboration with neighboring counties may be necessary. Funding was most often mentioned as an obstacle to improving specific youth services and programs. Problems of gaining public acceptance for new ideas and finding qualified people to handle localized programs were also anticipated.

Using budget estimates, the economic viability of basing four juvenile services in individual rural counties was explored—group homes, probation services, volunteer counseling, and professional mental health services. Cooperation among neighboring counties did seem to offer potentials for lowering costs in low-population areas. However, under the assumptions made, cost savings were not great for multicounty probation services or volunteer programs. Such intangibles as being easily accessible to local people, being an integral part of a community and, on the other hand, being close to other professionals could also be important locational considerations. Firm conclusions for all situations could not be drawn from this analysis, but it did serve to demonstrate the value of comparing alternative action proposals using budgeted cost estimates and a tradeoff framework.

Other insights gained from this study are: 1) Use of the term "juvenile delinquency" is not consistent from one person to another; clear definition is needed when talking or writing about delinquency. 2) There is not always clear understanding at local levels of the nature of certain proposed juvenile services, such as diagnostic centers, group homes, and volunteer counseling programs. 3) Many officials and leaders in rural communities are seeking better ways to deal with delinquency problems and would welcome opportunities for more information and training. 4) It is hard to construct a solid picture of local delinquency patterns and program costs on the basis of available statistics and agency records; research is needed on ways to obtain better facts without being too demanding on local personnel.

RURAL JUVENILE DELINQUENCY — PROBLEMS AND NEEDS IN EAST TENNESSEE

by William Dan Bolton and David W. Brown*

INTRODUCTION

Much is heard these days about crime and delinquency. A few researchers have given attention to such problems in small communities and rural areas. Recently Darrell J. Steffensmeier and Charlene Jordan have analyzed arrest data for several types of crimes, emphasizing female-male and rural-urban comparisons.[1] A series of studies in Ohio by Howard Phillips and associates has shed new light on rural crime patterns, characteristics of offenders and victims, and attitudes of local leaders toward these problems and their handling.[2] But most of the research on crime and delinquency has been oriented to large cities and their suburbs; insights related to nonmetropolitan settings are still sparse.[3] Equally important is a tendency to prescribe solutions without due regard for local resource constraints or systematic appraisal of feasible alternatives.

Focusing especially on juvenile delinquency, several questions come to mind: **To what extent are the delinquency patterns in rural places similar to those in the cities? Do the same causes of delinquency enter the picture? Can similar preventatives, law enforcement services, and rehabilitation measures be considered? What can the rural county with little tax revenue or specialized expertise do to cope with delinquency problems?**

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[1] See their article "Changing Patterns of Female Crime in Rural America, 1962-75," **Rural Sociology**, vol. 43, no. 1, Spring 1978, pp. 87-102.

[2] Some reports by Professor Phillips and his colleagues based on this research are: "Crime in Rural Ohio," **Ohio State University, Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology ESO 363**, March 1975; "Vandals and Vandalism in Rural Ohio," **Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center Research Circular 222**, October 1976; and "Environmental Factors in Rural Crime," **OARDC Research Circular 224**, November 1976.

[3] University of Iowa Professor H. Wayne Johnson calls attention to this knowledge gap, as well as to evidence that many rural places have rising crime rates, unique problems confronting youth, and inadequate or obsolete services and facilities. See his article "Crime, Delinquency and Criminal Justice Services in Rural America," **Human Services in the Rural Environment,"** vol. 3, no. 4, April 1978, pp. 1-5.

It is not necessarily true that patterns and causes of delinquency in the cities and suburbs are the same as those in rural places. One would expect much in common, especially as rural-urban distinctions have become blurred in recent years. But small towns, farming areas, and mining communities still have distinctive characteristics of their own that could lead to different kinds and sources of delinquency problems. In rural areas, kinship relationships and their effects on youth behavior are often stronger. Dealings among people in small communities are likely to be more personalized. However, creative recreational opportunities are often scarce in rural places. Access to a range of vocational training and career possibilities may be limited.

Also, specialized services related to juveniles—family and youth counseling, professional law enforcement and judiciary services, group homes and other rehabilitation aids—are not so likely to be found in small towns and rural counties. Small local populations and tax bases often make it difficult to fund such services or to supply personnel who deal specifically with juvenile problems. It may not be feasible to provide specialized help unless services are pooled with nearby rural counties or arrangements are made with institutions some distance away.

The study reported represents an exploratory effort to learn more about rural delinquency and possible solutions, as viewed by local officials and professional workers. The facts and impressions presented here are based on interviews with key persons in a multi-county area—the East Tennessee Development District. This information will not be new to workers in the District who have been close to law enforcement and youth development. But perhaps it will be useful to local leaders and parents, professionals in other rural settings, organizations concerned with improving rural life quality, and officials and lawmakers at state and national levels as a modest step toward more insights about, and more attention to, rural delinquency problems.

OBJECTIVES AND INFORMATION SOURCES

This study is based upon a survey of key persons concerned with juvenile counseling, law enforcement, and rehabilitation in the 15 East Tennessee Development District (ETDD) counties surrounding the Knoxville/Knox County metropolitan center (Figure 1). This study has three objectives:

1) To obtain the insights and opinions of these persons about juvenile delinquency patterns, trends, causes, ways of handling cases, and possible ways to improve services related to delinquency prevention and rehabilitation.

Figure 1. East Tennessee Development District counties and places with 5,000 or more people in 1975.

2) To learn whether delinquency problems, services, and needs were perceived to be different in counties that are primarily rural, as distinct from those that have large towns and cities.

3) To examine in preliminary fashion the economic feasibility of certain youth-related services (such as group homes and improved counseling services) that small towns and rural counties might consider, either alone or in association with other localities.

Information related to the first two objectives was obtained during summer of 1975 from 51 officials and professional workers who were involved at least part-time with juvenile problems in the Development District. They were selected on the basis of their positions and/or reputations as having special experience and insight. An effort was made to insure balanced representation from counties with and without sizable urban centers. Within any one county, contacts were made with key people from more than one agency.

The resulting purposive sample included the following:

9 judges: 6 county judges; 1 sessions judge; 1 county chairman; 1 full-time juvenile judge.

10 law enforcement workers: 6 juvenile officers; 2 sheriffs; 1 deputy sheriff; 1 city policeman.

28 counselors: 9 county juvenile counselors; 9 state juvenile counselors; 6 county human services workers; 2 mental health counselors; 1 drug counselor; 1 child and family services counselor.

4 school officials: 3 superintendents; 1 truant officer.

Of the 51 respondents, 44 were working within a single county or community. The remaining 7 (all counselors with state or regional agencies) served more than one county within the District. Most of them were based in Knoxville. Eighteen interviews were obtained from persons in the 7 "rural" counties which had towns or cities of 5,000 people or less. Twenty-six interviews were obtained from persons in the 8 counties which had population centers of more than 5,000. Because of the rural orientation of this study, information about juvenile problems in the large metropolitan center of Knoxville and Knox County was not sought.

The interviews were conducted by the senior author. A survey schedule was used, but the style of interview was informal and flexible so as to "bring out" the respondent as much as possible. In general, cooperation was excellent. Several respondents went out of their way to provide indepth background and helpful perspective.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part dealt with the kinds, causes, and trends in local youth offenses; methods and facilities for handling delinquency problems; and ways to alleviate or deal with nonmetropolitan delinquency problems. The second part sought opinions about the viability, advantages, and

disadvantages of nine specific programs or facilities that are often mentioned as possible components of improved youth services. These included: group homes, foster homes, probation and parole services, professional counseling services, in-service training for persons working with juvenile problems, volunteer programs, special classes for children with handicaps, detention and treatment centers, and recreation facilities.

The third study objective (exploring the economic viability of selected youth services in rural counties) required further information about investment needs, input requirements, and costs. Emphasis was on possible cost savings by operating on a multicounty basis or by contracting with a centralized service. An attempt was made to construct simulated budgets, since solid historical facts about actual performance and resource needs for such human services were sparse.

To help develop these budgets, about 20 additional persons in the District—mostly administrators of existing programs and institutions—were contacted. According to the alternative being examined, each person was asked such questions as: "How many juvenile cases could a counselor handle at any one time?" "How long would the typical youngster need this service?" "How much would one have to pay such a counselor at current rates?" "What office overhead and travel expenses would there be?" While it was sometimes possible to draw upon actual agency records and plans for such estimates, usually adaptation of figures to fit the specific alternatives being examined was necessary. Definitive cost comparisons did not result from this exploratory study. But the exercise did provide a clearer picture of the key fixed and variable cost items, as well as problems involved in puting alternative services on a comparable basis.[4]

SOME BACKGROUND ABOUT THE EAST TENNESSEE STUDY AREA

The East Tennessee Development District, in which the survey was conducted, has unique features of its own, yet embodies a spectrum of rural-urban conditions that is not unlike those in other parts of Tennessee and the U.S. (Selected demographic, economic, and crime facts are shown in Table 1.)

[4] For more details about the objectives and procedures of the study, see: William Dan Bolton, **Juvenile Delinquency in Rural Areas: An Exploratory Study in East Tennessee**, M.S. thesis, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, December 1976, 142 pp.

Table 1. Some facts about the East Tennessee study area

	East Tenn. Development District				
	7 "rural" counties[a]	8 counties with large towns[b]	Knox County	Tennessee	United States
Avg. population per county, 1975	19,557	40,862	295,100	44,084	70,171
Pct. change in population, 1970-75	+11.7	+8.2	+6.8	+6.7	+4.2
Pct. of population in rural areas, 1970	91	58	31	41	26
Pct. of population on farms, 1970	26	10	3	10	5
Pct. of population non-white, 1970	1.5	5.3	8.7	16.1	12.4
Pct. of population under 18 yrs., 1975	30	31	30	32	31
Pct. change in no. under 18 yrs., 1970-75	-3.9	+0.2	+3.2	+0.5	-4.9
Median yrs. of schooling, persons age 25 and over, 1970	8.6	10.4	12.0	10.6	12.1
Median family income, 1969 ($)	5,155	6,750	8,195	7,447	9,586
Pct. families below "poverty level," 1969	29	19	14	18	11
Crimes per 1000 people, 1975					
Violent	1.3	2.1	4.3	4.0	4.8
Property	12.8	23.2	47.7	38.7	48.0
Violent and property	14.1	25.3	52.0	42.7	52.8
Pct. change in crimes, 1970-75					
Violent	+8	+64	+50	+54	+39
Property	+99	+106	+92	+111	+39
Violent and property	+85	+102	+88	+141	+39
No. juvenile arrests per 1000 youths under 18, 1975					
Violent offenses	.37	.19	.12	.78	1.29
Property offenses	9.11	3.48	1.84	4.49	11.07
Violent and property offenses	9.48	3.67	1.96	5.25	12.36
Pct. of juvenile cases committed to state institutions, 1975	5.1	8.1	7.5	4.9	n.a.
Avg. no. of status offenders and delinquency cases per county, 1975	172	353	2,626	472	n.a.
Avg. no. of local juvenile court support staff (probation or youth service officers) per county, 1976	0.4	1.0	9.0	1.8	n.a.
Pct. of counties with no support staff, 1976	71	50	—	53	n.a.

[a]Includes Claiborne, Grainger, Monroe, Morgan, Scott, Sevier, and Union counties. None of these had towns or cities of more than 5,000 people in 1975.

[b]Includes Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Cocke, Hamblen, Jefferson, Loudon, and Roane counties. Each of these had at least one town or city of more than 5,000 people in 1975.

Sources: Data based on reports from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Department of Justice (FBI) and the Tennessee Law Enforcement Planning Agency.

Population Characteristics

In 1975, of the 758,900 people in the District, 295,100 (39%) lived in the Knoxville/Knox County hub, the third-largest metropolitan center in Tennessee. Another 73,100 (10%) lived in the three

medium-sized cities (in the 20-30,000 range) of Oak Ridge, Maryville-Alcoa, and Morristown. An additional 72,900 (10%) lived in 15 towns and cities in the 2,500-10,000 range. The remaining 41% lived in communities of less than 2,500 or in open-country places. Three counties (Grainger, Morgan, Union) had populations under 20,000 and no centers of more than 1,000 people. The District includes both highly urbanized and very rural situations.

Most of the population is white—95% overall in 1970—though some neighborhoods in Knoxville and other communities are predominantly black.

Between World War II and the 1960's, there was widespread outmigration from the rural areas of East Tennessee to large cities in the North and elsewhere in the South. However, in recent years populations of many ETDD towns and outlying areas have grown. This pattern has reflected several elements—the establishment and expansion of small industry in middle-sized towns of the Mid-South . . . the return of former residents for retirement purposes . . . desires of more families to move from large cities to nonmetropolitan settings . . . growth of recreation and tourism in the nearby Smoky Mountains and TVA lake regions . . . renewed vitality of the coal industry. This growth has brought many benefits to the District, but it has also meant problems for some localities in coping with needs for expanded educational, health, family living, and law enforcement services.

Economic and Community Features

Employment patterns and opportunities for young people in the District are diverse. Jobs in a variety of industrial, commercial, and public service outlets are to be found in such centers as Knoxville, Maryville-Alcoa, Oak Ridge, and Morristown. The service stations, restaurants, and motels along heavily traveled Interstates 40 and 75 that cross the District provide work for some without special skills. Seasonal outlets of this sort are found in Gatlinburg and other tourist towns near the Smoky Mountains and TVA lakes.

Many types of industry have come into the small and medium-sized towns of the District—trailer assembly, food processing, plastics, electronics, textiles, wood products, etc. These have created job outlets for young people with technical skills. On the other hand, in some towns available jobs have been relatively unspecialized and low-paying, with little chance for upward mobility.

Some communities in the District are quite isolated. Those near the Kentucky border have depended heavily on the coal mining and timber industries. Though some local jobs may be available, young people in these [illegible] often have to commute or move. Likewise, vocational training opportunities are not always near the rural localities.

There are few full-time commercial farmers in the District. In East Tennessee a pattern of part-time farming on relatively small units dominates (often with beef cattle, corn, and burley tobacco). The price of farmland is high, reflecting desires of townspeople for country living and demands for commercial sites. Many young people in rural localities of the area have to seek something other than agriculture for their livelihood.

Overall unemployment rates have not been high in the District, but there are pockets—especially in the rural counties—where finding a job is a problem for young people. Unemployment among 16-19 year-olds in 1975 was 12% in Knox county and was only 14% in two nearby counties (Blount and Union). At the other extreme, youth unemployment that year was more than 30% in four outlying counties (Cocke, Monroe, Campbell, Scott).

Organized recreation in the smaller towns and hamlets has been spotty. Their young people have few outlets besides nearby "hangouts" or perhaps some school athletic events. However, unlike some places in the U.S., there is abundant access to outdoor recreation—boating, swimming, fishing, mountain hiking, etc.

One finds sharp contrasts in East Tennessee. For example, Anderson County is the site of Oak Ridge, a major energy development center with many professional people, relatively high incomes, and a comprehensive set of social and educational services. Yet just a few miles away are found coal-mining communities with poor access to main roads, limited job opportunities, and few public services or organized recreational outlets.

Juvenile Services in the District

Concerning the prevention and treatment of delinquency problems, some key agencies and facilities that existed in the 16 counties at the time of the survey in 1975 were as follows:

1) Multicounty services . . . based in Knoxville

State Department of Correction, regional office. (Supplies juvenile probation counselors and related services to the entire ETDD area.)

East Tennessee regional juvenile diagnostic and treatment center. (Was designed to serve all 16 counties. Overnight facilities for 40.)

State Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Children and Youth Services. (Provides mental health counseling,

		drug/alcohol rehabilitation services, and a group home facility for adolescent boys. Knoxville facilities serve the 16 ETDD counties plus 8 others.)
		Florence Crittenton Agency. (Helps unwed pregnant girls, and operates group home for adolescent girls.)
		Sunshine Learning Center. (Residential facility for retarded juveniles, including those who have had brushes with the law.)
		East Tennessee Development District law enforcement planning office. (Help to counties in coordinating program and obtaining Federal funds.)
2)	Multicounty services . . . located elsewhere in the 16-county area	State Department of Correction, field offices at Oak Ridge, Morristown, and Madisonville.
		Cherokee Guidance Center in Morristown. (A regional mental health center serving 5 counties.)
		Regional Mental Health Center of Oak Ridge.
3)	Other, more locally . . . oriented services	Child and Family Services, Knox and Blount counties. (Provides counseling; arranges foster care; operates group homes.)
		A home for neglected and dependent juveniles operated by Knox County.
		An emergency care home for younger children operated by Catholic Social Services in Knoxville.
		The Daniel Arthur Rehabilitation Center in Oak Ridge.
		2 community mental health centers serving Knox County.

Legal aid clinics at the University of Tennessee and in a few other places in the District.

To this one might add a variety of important, though perhaps less visible, services found in Knoxville and some other communities—alcohol and drug rehabilitation organizations . . . community centers in low-income neighborhoods . . . special education and counseling programs in the school systems . . . the Big Brothers-Big Sisters program . . . Project First Offender . . . Boys' Club and Girls' Club work with status offenders . . . emergency help provided through the FISH telephone network . . . community recreation activities supported by civic clubs . . . local church outreach activities . . . private psychiatric services.

The general picture is that services related to juvenile behavioral problems in the ETDD area have tended to be concentrated in Knoxville and a few other large towns. In the past, few facilities or professional workers have been located in the outlying rural counties. Case loads have been heavy and spaces in group facilities limited. Funding has not been abundant or highly predictable; most groups other than the State agencies have been financed by a variable mix of government grants or contracts, private donations, and client fees.

Since 1975 additional juvenile services have been initiated in the District. Some existing services have been expanded. In part, this has stemmed from new Federal funds made available through the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. More attention has been given to nonmetropolitan areas. New juvenile services initiated (or at least planned) in the ETDD area include the following among others:

- **In several counties, a youth service officer to help the part-time juvenile judge in getting background information, serving warrants, providing counseling, and handling followup needs.
- **A volunteer juvenile officer program in Claibourne County, in cooperation with Lincoln Memorial University.
- **Closer cooperation between juvenile workers and school officials in some counties.
- **A group home in Jefferson County for girls in trouble.
- **A community resource officer in Campbell County to help coordinate juvenile and family services.
- **Use of citizen volunteers to help the Monroe County court system counsel juveniles.

- **A community resource officer in Campbell County to help coordinate juvenile and family services.
- **An emergency home in Hamblen County as a substitute for placing youth for short stays in jail.
- **Efforts to establish a group home in Scott County.
- **Authorization of three group homes in the ETDD area to be operated by the Department of Correction for status offenders.
- **In Knox County, a Child and Family Service sex-abuse hotline, a crisis center for the abused and runaways, an additional group home, and a diversion program for status offenders.

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL JUVENILE PROBLEMS AND SERVICES

In the 1975 survey of 51 officials and professional workers in East Tennessee, the first part of the interviews dealt with the general aspects of delinquency—local patterns, trends, causes, and efforts to tackle these problems. Statistics compiled by state and federal agencies about juvenile delinquency are helpful but are often sketchy, especially for rural areas. It was believed that the insights and impressions of knowledgeable persons actually involved at the local level would help augment such data for planning future programs. Of special interest were the perceived differences in situations between rural counties and urbanized counties.

The Differing Concepts of "Juvenile Delinquency"

When people talk about "juvenile delinquency," they are not always referring to the same thing. To avoid confusion in the interviews as well as to find out how uniform the concept was among officials and professionals in the ETDD area, each respondent was asked to choose from a list the definition that most closely matched his or her own notion. A summary of how a "juvenile delinquent" was defined is as follows:

A person under 18 committing an offense that would be considered a felony if he or she were as adult[5] ..... 22 respondents (43%)

[5]This concept of juvenile delinquency is similar to that used in most administrative and legal discussions. It excludes status offenses—behavior that would not be illegal if one were an adult (e.g., truancy, buying liquor, running away, being ungovernable). It excludes minor infractions (misdemeanors), such as common traffic violations. It includes all juveniles committing a relevant offense, whether or not they are apprehended. In Tennessee, a person becomes legally an adult at age 18.

A person committing an offense, **including** status offenses, that would subject him or her to the jurisdiction of a juvenile court[6]. . . . . 22 respondents (43%)[7]

A person committing an offense, **excluding** status offenses, that would subject him or her to the jurisdiction of a juvenile court[6]. . . . . .1 respondent (2%)

A person under 18 committing a felony or misdemeanor . . . . . .1 respondent (2%)

A person under 18 who is having serious problems adjusting to society . . . . . 3 respondents (6%)

A child who gets into trouble because his or her parents lose control . . . . . 2 respondents (4%)

As seen from the above, the respondents tended to split into two groups when it came to defining delinquency. One group (which included 67% of the judges and juvenile counselors interviewed) did **not** consider status offenders or juveniles who had committed only misdemeanors to be delinquents. The other large group (which included 60% of the law enforcement personnel interviewed) **did** include status offenders and those committing minor infractions in their definitions.

For 5 of the 51, juvenile delinquency was a more sociological, less legalistic concept. They defined a delinquent as a young person who is having serious problems adjusting to society or who gets into trouble because parents lose control.

So what may have appeared to some as a redundant question did not prove to be so. Such differences in concepts of juvenile delinquency could lead to confusion and inconsistency when it comes to law enforcement, development of youth programs, professional training activities, and statistical reporting. The definition of delinquency may well vary, according to the particular task at hand. But, if the findings of this survey are any indication, **there is real need to clarify each time what is meant by "juvenile delinquency" so that everyone will use the same frame of reference.** Such clarification became helpful when asking questions later in the survey.

[6]This definition includes both major and minor offenses (felonies and misdemeanors).

[7]Two of these 22 respondents included in their definition only those juveniles actually caught and charged with an offense.

Local Delinquency Patterns and Trends

Including status offenses as well as other acts, the 51 respondents were asked some questions about what they saw as the emerging local patterns in delinquency—types, trends, ages of offenders, and rural-urban differences (Table 2).

Most respondents (71%) believed that delinquency was becoming more frequent. Multicounty workers were less inclined than county-level people to feel that delinquency rates were increasing. Only four respondents (three of them in rural counties) felt that delinquency rates were decreasing.

The majority (54%) believed that juveniles were tending to commit more serious offenses than in the past. Nine additional persons (18%) specifically mentioned trends toward more drug use and drug-related crimes. This concern about juvenile drug problems was especially apparent in the rural counties. No one thought that the trend was for juveniles to commit less serious offenses.

Breaking and entering, petty theft, and drug offenses were mentioned most often as being especially common in recent years. Drug crimes as well as status offenses were most frequently highlighted in the rural counties.

Each respondent was asked whether he or she thought rural and urban areas differed as to types of juvenile offenses. Most (except for multicounty workers) did not feel there were notable rural-urban differences. Those who mentioned one or more differences thought that urban places were more prone to have serious offenses (9 persons), crimes of personal violence (6 persons), gang activity (6 persons), and drug-related problems (4 persons).

Many respondents observed that delinquent behavior was most often encountered among juveniles 14 to 18 years of age. However, most (87% of the respondents) saw trends for delinquency to be more common among younger youths. Several noted with alarm that children as young as 10 or 11 years of age were becoming involved in serious offenses. Some (though not a majority) believed that delinquent behavior "peaks out" at the age of 16 and that older youths are less likely to be involved.

Perceived Causes of Delinquency

Asked what they regarded as the main causes of delinquency in the areas they served, by far the most frequent response related to one or more problems in the delinquents' own home environment—broken marriages, inadequate parental guidance and supervision, lack of discipline and control, problems associated with low-incomes, etc. (Table 3). Some judges said that 80 to 90% of the juveniles brought before them came from "poor" home situations.

Table 2. Perceived juvenile delinquency patterns and trends, 61 officials and professionals in 15 East Tennessee counties, 1975

	Respondents working in			
	Rural counties[a]	Counties with large towns[a]	Multi-county areas	All respondents
	-Pct. of those who answered the question-			
Overall trend in local delinquency	(18)[b]	(26)	(7)	(51)
Increasing	72	77	43	71
Constant or proportional to population changes	11	23	43	22
Decreasing	17	0	14	8
Trends in types of juvenile offenses	(18)	(25)	(7)	(50)
More serious than before	33	68	57	54
More drug-related than before	28	8	29	18
No trend	39	24	14	28
Less serious than before	0	0	0	0
Most frequent juvenile offenses locally[c]	(15)	(19)	(4)	(38)
Breaking and entering	16	30	38	26
Petty theft	16	30	25	25
Drugs	28	15	0	18
Status	20	5	12	11
Grand larceny (major theft)	4	5	12	5
Property damage (vandalism)	0	8	0	4
Runaways	8	0	12	4
Shoplifting	4	5	0	4
Armed robbery	4	2	0	3
Rural-urban differences in types of juvenile offenses				
Juvenile offenses	(18)	(26)	(7)	(51)
Did not see major differences	72	77	43	71
Did see major differences	28	23	57	29
Trends in ages of juvenile offenders	(16)	(22)	(7)	(45)
More younger offenders	88	86	86	87
No trend	12	14	14	13
More older offenders	0	0	0	0
Age group presenting the most problems	(17)	(25)	(7)	(49)
Lower "problem" age mentioned:				
10 or 11 yrs. old	12	4	0	6
12 or 13 yrs. old	12	24	43	22
14 or 15 yrs. old	76	72	57	71
Upper "problem" age mentioned:				
14 yrs. old	6	0	0	2
15 or 16 yrs. old	29	40	43	37
17 to 18 yrs. old	65	60	57	61

[a]In this and subsequent tables, "counties with large towns" refers to those with at least one incorporated urban place of more than 5,000 people in 1973. "Rural counties" are those which did not have any towns or cities of more than 5,000.

[b]In this and subsequent tables, total number of respondents in this group who answered this question. Percents for each group may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

[c]Respondents were allowed to give more than one answer to this question.

Table 3. Perceived causes of local juvenile delinquency problems, 61 officials and professionals in 15 East Tennessee counties, 1975

	Respondents working in			
	Rural counties	Counties with large towns	Multi-county areas	All respondents
	-Pct. of those who answered the question-			
Elements felt to be major causes of delinquency in their county or area[a]	(18)	(25)	(7)	(50)
General home environment	73	68	53	68
Environment outside the home	16	16	35	18
Lenient or impersonal courts	2	4	6	4
Drugs	7	3	0	4
Problems in school	2	3	0	2
Other (peer group pressure, influence of TV, youths inability to deal with authority)	0	6	6	4
Perceived rural-urban differences in causes of delinquency problems	(18)	(26)	(7)	(51)
Did not see major differences	83	81	71	80
Did see major differences	17	19	29	20

[a]Respondents were allowed to give more than one answer to this question. Two or more of the specific causes mentioned by any one person may have been grouped together hereunder in a single category.

Several respondents mentioned characteristics of the wider community environment which they regarded as contributing causes—lack of recreational facilities especially . . . also lack of job opportunities, inadequate involvement of parents and local leadership in tackling delinquency problems, lax social values, and the social deprivations of rural areas.

Also mentioned as perceived causes of delinquency were: lenient court decisions, impersonal law enforcement, problems stemming from drug use, individual lack of success in school, legal restraints placed on school personnel in dealing with youth problems, peer group pressure, bad influence from television, and lack of authority figures or role models with whom children with problems could relate.

In general, the causes of delinquency were viewed by respondents in the rural counties and the counties with large towns in much the same way. When asked directly whether they felt there were rural-urban differences in the causes of juvenile delinquency, most (80%) said "No." Of those who did specify rural-urban differences, six mentioned problems of crowding and inner-city decline in urban centers. Three other respondents saw urban areas as places where 1) youths and their families are subjected to more pressure and strain, 2) encounters with drugs are more likely, and 3) it is harder to maintain close family ties and friendships.

Disposition of Juvenile Cases

The nine judges interviewed (only one was a full-time juvenile court judge) were asked how they dealt with juveniles who had been found to be offenders.

The judges were using Tennessee Department of Correction facilities for youths who had committed unusually serious crimes, who were repeaters, or who needed special rehabilitative help beyond the capacities of local personnel and agencies.[8] For dependent-neglected youngsters (i.e., those who do not have suitable homes), most judges made some use of the Department of Education's Preparatory School. However judges were in general reluctant to institutionalize youthful offenders or to send them to distant places if something could be arranged to keep these young people in their home environment.[9]

[8]The Tennessee Department of Correction operates six juvenile institutions: the Tennessee Youth Development Center, at Somerville (for boys and girls aged 12-14); the Highland Rim School for Girls (aged 14-18), at Tullahoma; the Spencer Youth Center, at Nashville (for boys aged 14-18 who are status for first-time offenders, or who have committed only minor offenses); the Taft Youth Center, at Pikeville (for boys aged 14-18 who are multiple offenders or who have committed more serious offenses); the Tennessee Youth Center, near Nashville at Joelton (for boys from the Taft and Spencer centers who desire 12 months' vocational and academic training, and also for boys classified as mentally retarded offenders); the Tennessee Reception and Guidance Center, at Nashville (processes and tests youths who have been referred to State correctional institutions).

[9]Data compiled by the Tennessee Law Enforcement Planning Agency provide some indication of the disposition of juvenile court cases during 1975 (including both delinquents and status offenders). The average "rural" county in the East Tennessee Development District reported 172 court cases, of whom 9 (5%) were sent to state institutions. The average county in the District with a large town (excluding Knox County) reported 353 cases, of whom 29 (8%) were sent to state institutions. Of all such juvenile court cases in Tennessee, 5% were sent to state institutions in 1975.

The rate of institutionalization varied considerably from county to county. Two (rural) ETDD counties sent none or fewer than 1% of their juvenile cases to state institutions. At the other extreme, one county reported sending 23% of its cases.

The above figures are not regarded by the Agency or others as very complete. But county data about known dispositions do give the picture that, in ETDD and most other development districts of Tennessee, the majority of cases (if not dismissed) were placed on probation, warned and released, referred to counseling, etc., rather than placed in state institutions. On the other hand, officials have noticed a trend since 1975 for counties to refer more status offenders to state institutions. For referrals of dependent-neglected cases to the Preparatory School, each county has a specified limit on the number that it can send. With few exceptions, these quotas have been consistently filled.

Accordingly, most judges made considerable use of probation and counseling services—to the extent that such were available in the county or at centers elsewhere. Warnings and reprimands were issued, especially for first offenders who seemed to be in need of being impressed about the potential seriousness of their behavior pattern. Constructive retribution was being tried out by at least one of the judges interviewed. For example, a juvenile caught stealing gas from a school bus might be "sentenced" to washing and cleaning several school buses for a specified period of time. It appeared that court officials would be using such non-institutional routes more if available outlets and sources of help were not so limited in rural counties.

In five of the counties, at least occasional use was being made of local jails for detaining juveniles either before or after court hearings. (Modern detention facilities, especially for juveniles, are not available in most counties in the District.) The judges did not appear happy about this, but apparently lack of local youth detention facilities and reluctance to send young persons to even stranger settings away from the county were decisive factors when only short periods were involved. Also there was some element of thought that a brief stay in jail would impress certain offenders with the seriousness of their behavior.[10]

At the time of the survey in 1975, the Regional Diagnostic and Treatment Center for Youthful Offenders was being established in Knoxville. It was the first such regional facility in Tennessee. It was designed to help ETDD counties which did not have specialized diagnostic or juvenile detention capabilities of their own. There was to be some cost to the counties for each referral (transportation and $8.00 per day for lodging), but all of the diagnostic expense would be covered through Federal grant funding. Though the counties had been involved in planning the Center, some judges interviewed seemed to hesitate to use this new regional facility. Several were unsure or confused about the kinds of services to be offered. Several were reluctant to send their youngsters out of the county even for a few days. There was some feeling that Knoxville would be the main beneficiary. Since 1975, most of the ETDD counties have made some use of the Center, but by far the largest numbers have come from Knox County.[11]

[10]Tennessee law specifies that juveniles and adults in local detention facilities be separated. However, statistics collected for law enforcement planning purposes in 1977 indicate that three-fourths of the local facilities in the state have not always been meeting such requirements.

[11] During 1976, the first full year of its operation, 2,526 boys and girls were referred to the Center for diagnostic or temporary detention purposes. All but 122 came from Knox County. The typical stay was 2 to 5 days. There is some evidence that the services provided by the Center are resulting in notable increases in the use of probation.

As a group, the judges seemed to be genuinely interested in doing what they could to help youngsters become productive citizens, rather than imposing harsh penalties for minor offenses. They seemed perplexed about how to handle certain kinds of cases in the midst of funding shortages, and inadequate youth facilities and services at the local level. They seemed to feel the need for more information and training about delinquency prevention and rehabilitation—for themselves as well as for other local human services and law enforcement workers.

Perceived Adequacy of Local Juvenile Facilities and Opportunities

The 44 respondents who were working within single counties were asked how they would rate their local situations for young people with respect to 1) professional counseling services, 2) recreational facilities, 3) job opportunities, and 4) educational and vocational training facilities (Table 4).

Table 4. Ratings of existing quality of local youth service and opportunities, 44 officials and professionals in 15 East Tennessee counties, 1975

Personal ratings of locally available:	Respondents working in		
	Rural counties	Counties with large towns	All county level workers
	-Pct. of those who answered the question-		
Professional counseling services	(18)	(26)	(44)
Very good	11	58	39
Good	11	19	13
Fair	61	19	36
Poor	17	4	9
Very poor	0	0	0
Recreation facilities	(18)	(26)	(44)
Very good	0	54	32
Good	17	38	30
Fair	61	8	30
Poor	22	0	9
Very poor	0	0	0
Job opportunities for young people	(18)	(26)	(44)
Very good	0	38	23
Good	17	35	27
Fair	50	19	32
Poor	33	8	18
Very poor	0	0	0
Educational and vocational training facilities	(18)	(26)	(44)
Very good	0	35	20
Good	11	31	23
Fair	61	23	39
Poor	28	0	11
Very poor	0	11	7

Overall, the 18 officials and youth workers in the rural counties rated these facilities and opportunities as only "fair," whereas the 26 respondents in counties with large towns tended to give their situations higher marks ("good" or "very good"). This is not surprising, since it is often difficult for rural counties to provide good educational and recreational facilities, or to attract employers and professional personnel.

All of the 51 respondents were asked how they felt about the total amounts of time and money being devoted to juvenile delinquency problems in the counties they served (Table 5). Three-fourths (78%) thought that **too little** was being spent for such purposes. This feeling was less apparent in the rural counties. No one thought that **too much** was being spent on juvenile delinquency.

When asked what specific kinds of delinquency-related services, if any, ought to be strengthened, professional counseling and juvenile probation (more specialists, reduced case loads, etc.) were the services most often mentioned as needing improvement (Table 5). Several in the rural counties saw need for more and better recreational outlets for young people. Several in the counties with large towns felt that having their own juvenile detention center would be desirable.

Table 5. Feelings about local juvenile services needing more attention, 51 officials and professionals in 15 East Tennessee counties, 1975

	Respondents working in			
	Rural counties	Counties with large towns	Multicounty areas	All respondents
	-Pct. of those who answered the question-			
Personal feelings about the amounts of time and money devoted to delinquency problems in their county	(18)	(24)	(7)	(49)
Too little	67	83	86	78
About right	33	17	14	22
Too much	0	0	0	0
Juvenile services felt to be in need of strengthening[a]	(12)	(21)	(7)	(40)
Professional counseling help	26	29	6	23
Juvenile probation counselors	5	19	41	20
County detention center	16	17	18	17
Recreational facilities	32	9	6	14
Educational and training facilities	5	5	12	6
Halfway houses	5	5	0	4
Volunteer guidance programs	0	5	6	4
Foster homes	5	2	6	4
Helps in getting jobs	0	2	6	3
Special police officers	0	5	0	3
Full-time juvenile judge	5	2	0	3

[a]Respondents were allowed to give more than one answer to this question.

OPINIONS ABOUT NINE WAYS TO IMPROVE JUVENILE SERVICES

Many survey respondents in the East Tennessee Development District disliked having to rely on distant correctional institutions or adult-oriented services for dealing with local delinquency problems. Many saw a need for better juvenile services that related more closely to the family and community environment. Yet how to do this in low-population rural counties with small tax bases and few professional workers posed a problem.

Feelings and insights about some improvements that individual counties—or groups of counties—might consider were explored. The focus was on nine kinds of programs or facilities which are often mentioned by professional workers as part of local or regional efforts to tackle delinquency problems: 1) group and halfway homes; 2) foster homes; 3) probation and aftercare services; 4) professional counseling services; 5) educational programs for judges, sheriffs, teachers, and others concerned with juvenile problems; 6) volunteer youth counseling programs; 7) special education classes in schools; 8) detention and treatment centers; and 9) recreation facilities. As can be seen from Figure 2, these are just a few of many possibilities related to juvenile delinquency prevention, law enforcement, and treatment. To the extent that they felt able, the 51 respondents were asked to give opinions about each of the nine services in terms of perceived advantages and disadvantages, viability at county and other geographic levels, and likely obstacles to establishment or expansion. (Not all respondents were familiar with every term, and some explanations had to be provided.) The most frequent responses are summarized in the nine subsections that follow:

1. **Group homes and halfway houses** (46 persons gave opinions)[12]

Group homes are discussed in professional circles as alternatives to large institutions or as temporary substitutes for the home environment. Though sometimes set up as large dormitories, usually they are houses that can handle 10 to 20 youths under the guidance of resident "parents" who are skilled counselors. Group homes can be set up to deal with one or more specific needs—runaways, youths with drug or alcohol problems, unwed pregnant girls, neglected or mistreated juveniles, temporary shelter during family crises, temporary detention for status offenders, etc. Halfway houses are

[12] For this and the other eight services, items mentioned by fewer than four or five persons are not included here. The percents are based on the total number of responses to each particular question. Except for the "best geographic level" question, respondents could give more than one answer.

Figure 2. Possible lines of actions related to juvenile delinquency prevention, law enforcement, and treatment.

Delinquency Prevention	Law Enforcement and Adjudication	Treatment and Rehabilitation[a]
Training for parents, teachers, clergy, & civic leaders	Offender diagnostic services	Correctional institutions geared to specific types of offenders and age groups, & providing rehabilitative help
Temporary shelter for runaways, abused children, unwed mothers	Training for law enforcement personnel, judges, others dealing with offenders	Good probation and aftercare services, without excessive case loads
Day care for children of working mothers	Establishment of separate juvenile detention and judiciary systems	Community-based group, halfway and/or foster homes for youths who temporarily or permanently cannot stay with their families
Welfare laws that discourage family breakups	Adequate local support staff	Professional counseling for youths with special emotional or other problems, and for their families
Special education for the handicapped	Coordination of law enforcement with policies of schools, insights of professional experts and counselors	"Project First Offender" and other volunteer assistance programs
Crisis center		Treatment for alcohol and drug problems
Vocational training and career guidance		Wilderness schools, civic work assignments, and other constructive challenges
Creation of more job opportunities		
Constructive recreational outlets and youth activities		
Involvement of parents, school officials, civic leaders, youth peers in dealing with potential problems		

[a]Of course, it is hoped that most treatment and rehabilitation actions have the effect of preventing or reducing delinquency later on.

similar in concept but serve as a stepping stone back into society following institutionalization. Most group homes and halfway houses are in large cities; for small towns and rural areas the concept is rather new.[13]

[13] Since 1975, Federal matching funds have become available to establish and operate 10 group homes for status offenders in Tennessee, as part of the state's "Comprehensive Plan for Improvement of Law Enforcement." By 1977 there was authorization for three such homes in the East Tennessee Development District, but difficulties were being encountered in finding sites that were suitable yet not opposed by neighborhood groups. (Homeowners incorrectly tend to think of group homes as jails that house hardened criminals.) Conscious effort was being made to locate at least one home in a rural county.

Advantages: Would get child out of a bad home environment (52%). Would provide an alternative to sending child to large corrections institutions or keeping in jail (17%). Would provide child with more individual attention (13%).

Disadvantages: No serious disadvantages seen (68%). Likely to have problems of poor organization and management (11%). May be too much like a large institution (9%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (48%). Entire development district jointly (27%). 2 to 4 counties jointly (23%).

Obstacles to establishment: Obtaining needed funds (57%). Getting quality staff (21%). Gaining favorable public opinion (15%).

2. **More placement in foster homes** (48 persons gave opinions)

Temporary or long-term foster home care is increasingly being thought of as an alternative to institutionalization for juveniles with existing or potential behavioral problems who, for one reason or another, cannot stay with their own parents. In some ways, foster homes serve needs similar to group homes. Such "problem" youngsters may require foster parents with special qualifications.

Advantages: Would get child out of a bad home environment (53%). Would enable child to be with a family unit (33%). Would provide child with more individual attention (10%).

Disadvantages: Foster parents may not be able to cope with child's problems (40%). No serious disadvantages seen (28%). Child may resent the foster parents (11%). As now handled, matching of child and foster parents is sometimes poor (8%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (79%). Entire development district jointly (11%). 2 to 4 counties jointly (9%).

Obstacles to expanded improvement: Getting and keeping good foster parents (52%). Obtaining needed funds (35%).

3. **Expanded juvenile probation services** (50 persons gave opinions)

The Tennessee Department of Correction provides juvenile probation services to all nonmetropolitan counties from area offices. Major cities and some smaller centers have additional services of their own. These probation and youth service officers help local law enforcement personnel and courts to process offenders, arrange for foster care or other non-institutional helps, and provide aftercare for those who have been in correctional institutions. But case loads are heavy, salary schedules do not always attract highly qualified personnel, and much time is often consumed in travel to and from rural localities.

Advantages: Would provide for more individual attention and counseling (56%). Would decrease the number of cases per counselor (36%).

Disadvantages: No serious disadvantages seen (74%). Funds could be better used in other programs (12%). The quality of counselors may decline if these services expand too fast (8%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (84%).

Obstacles to expansion: Obtaining needed funds (78%). Gaining favorable public opinion (10%).

4. **Expanded professional counseling services** (50 persons gave opinions)

Specialized human services are needed to help local workers and officials deal with unusually difficult problems of mental health, drug abuse, learning difficulties, family relationships, etc. These private and public services tend to be located in the larger cities. Competent help is not always readily accessible to people in outlying areas or to low-income families.

Advantages: Would provide help to those who need it (72%). Would not only aid the child, but also help parents to improve the home environment (16%). Would result in earlier identification and diagnosis of behavioral problems (8%).

Disadvantages: No serious disadvantages seen (64%). If inadequately funded or planned, staff may not have proper qualifications (22%). Funds could be better used in other programs (12%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (48%). Entire development district jointly (21%). 2 to 4 counties jointly (17%).

Obstacles to expansion: Obtaining needed funds (60%). Gaining favorable public opinion (20%). Getting and keeping high quality staff (11%). No major obstacles seen (8%).

5. **Training programs for local persons working with juvenile problems** (50 persons gave opinions)

Training programs would be aimed at such persons as law enforcement officers, judges and local court support personnel, school teachers and administrators, foster parents, clergy, and volunteer youth leaders and counselors. They could include a variety of learning approaches such as formal classes, special workshops, in-service training sessions, panel discussions, and observation trips to other places.

Advantages: Would generate better general understanding of delinquency problems, possible solutions, and roles of specific

groups (41%). Would enable key people to learn about new methods for dealing with juvenile problems (23%). Would encourage closer communication among local, area, and state agencies (23%). Would facilitate exchange of ideas and experiences (14%).

Disadvantages: No serious disadvantages seen (94%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (42%). Entire development district jointly (35%). 2 to 4 counties jointly (17%).

Obstacles to establishment: Getting people to attend learning sessions (49%). No major obstacles seen (22%). Obtaining needed funds (18%). Organizing and coordinating training efforts (11%).

6. **Volunteer youth counseling programs** (36 persons gave opinions)

Volunteer programs could take forms similar to "Project First Offender" and the "Big Brother-Big Sister" programs which utilize volunteer adult citizens as counselors and friends to youths who are in trouble or who may be headed in that direction. Such programs can be a way to reduce needs for institutionalization and for professional workers.

Advantages: Would encourage more community involvement in understanding and dealing with juvenile problems (30%). Would enable juveniles to receive individualized attention (26%). Would provide youths in poor home situations with someone to look up to (13%). Would help to decrease professionals' work overloads (9%).

Disadvantages: Volunteers may not be able to handle certain behavioral youth problems (43%). No serious disadvantages seen (33%). Volunteers may become a burden on professional staffs (14%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (83%). 2 to 4 counties jointly (15%).

Obstacles to establishment: Getting good volunteers (54%). Obtaining needed funds to coordinate and backstop volunteer activities (14%). Providing the volunteers with adequate training (10%). Organizing and coordinating the volunteer work (8%).

7. **Special education classes for handicapped youth** (51 persons gave opinions)

Some delinquency problems stem from mental or physical handicaps, or unusual learning disabilities. Special programs in the schools can help to identify and diagnose such difficulties, as well as to enable youngsters (and their families) to cope with and overcome

latent behavioral problems.

Advantages: Would give the handicapped child an opportunity to progress at his or her own speed (55%). Would help build a child's confidence (12%). Would enable teachers to give more attention to each child (12%). Pressure and strain on the child may be less (12%). May provide helpful peer group reinforcement (8%).

Disadvantages: No serious disadvantages seen (79%). The teacher and/or child may not be able to cope with all problems that arise (17%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (94%).

Obstacles to expansion: Obtaining needed funds (55%). Getting teachers with the right qualifications (26%). Gaining favorable public opinion (11%).

8. **Detention and treatment centers** (31 persons gave opinions)

Such centers could provide facilities, separate from adults, to hold offenders who cannot be returned home before adjudication, as well as to diagnose behavioral causes and, if possible, take steps toward remedying the problem. At the time of the survey, a center to serve the entire ETDD area was being established in Knoxville.

Advantages: Would provide specialized testing and treatment not presently available in many nonmetropolitan counties (46%). Would make it unnecessary to hold youthful offenders in jails with adults (42%). Would encourage more local treatment and less institutionalization (12%).

Disadvantages: No serious disadvantages seen (59%). Funds can be better used in other programs (22%).

Best geographic level: Entire development district jointly (61%). 7 or 8 counties jointly (19%).

Obstacles to establishment or utilization: Obtaining needed funds to establish local center or to pay for services at regional center (80%). Gaining favorable public opinion about establishing or using such facilities (11%).

9. **Recreation facilities** (51 persons gave opinions)

Youngsters in rural areas and small towns often do not have many outlets to turn to during their idle time. School recreation programs may not be very active, and there may be little other than local "hangouts." Local governments, civic clubs, and churches can have constructive roles. A wide variety of activities and facilities can be considered, such as improved family-oriented parks, swimming

pools, athletic facilities, teen-age centers, youth clubs, summer recreational programs, and organized excursions to interesting places or events.

Advantages: Give the young person a place to go and something to do in leisure time (75%). Provide pressure release for the youth with worries and frustrations (9%). Organized programs help develop self-discipline (8%). Help teach how to get along with others (6%).

Disadvantages: No serious disadvantages seen (85%). May not help to solve problems underlying delinquent behavior (8%).

Best geographic level: Each county separately (100%).

Obstacles to improvement: Obtaining needed funds (58%). No major obstacles seen (21%). Arranging for proper staffing (11%).

The preceding responses imply special interest (among officials and professionals, at least) in services that can prevent or solve delinquency problems within youths' present home environments—better recreational outlets; upgraded individual and family guidance; more involvement of local persons concerned with youth behavioral problems; special educational help for those with certain handicaps. For those youths who cannot be kept at home, the idea of placing them in nearby foster homes or group homes seemed to be more appealing than sending them off to distant institutions, except in unusual cases. There was some concern (less so among respondents in the rural counties than the others) that local officials, house parents, teachers, and volunteers could not deal with the more complex juvenile cases; need was seen for training and backstopping help. It was recognized that it may not be feasible for each county individually to operate its own professional guidance, diagnostic, and training services.

Funding was seen as a major problem for improvement of, or gaining access to, six of the nine services—group homes, probation services, professional counseling, detention and treatment centers, special education, and recreation. Unfavorable public opinion was perceived as an obstacle to some improvements—especially community-based group homes and halfway houses, as well as expanded use of professional counseling services. Another problem, particularly in the rural counties, was that of getting well trained juvenile workers to live and work in outlying communities which lack urban amenities, even if such counties could pay for professional personnel of their own.

In their assessments of the nine services, there was no clear difference between respondents in the rural counties and those in the counties with larger centers. Only two fairly minor distinctions

seem worth noting: 1) Those in the rural counties seemed less reluctant to remove juveniles from "bad" home environments to be placed in nearby foster or group homes, but more reluctant to send them off to treatment or correctional centers far away. 2) Those in the rural counties seemed less worried about the abilities of foster parents, volunteer counselors, and other lay persons to cope with difficult behavioral problems (assuming there would be some professional training and backstopping provided).

THE ECONOMICS OF DECENTRALIZING JUVENILE SERVICES

Many of the persons interviewed in the East Tennessee survey preferred that juvenile services be located as much as possible in or near the home community. Yet they recognized that such dispersion would not always be feasible or cost-efficient. The individual rural town or county may not have enough young people, funds, or professionals. It may be better to pool some services and facilities with nearby localities or to arrange for such services at a large regional center.

Costs vs. Other Considerations

Before initiating a new juvenile service, the sponsoring agency would do well to take a close look at its "economics." One needs to ask: **1) What are the costs and investment requirements of establishing it at the local level? 2) How much savings, if any, would there be by operating the service on a multicounty basis of some sort?** Such estimates usually have to be pieced together in the form of a "budget" from several factual and judgmental sources.

To gain a feel for the viability of locally based juvenile services in rural East Tennessee, we explored the costs of some alternative ways to meet four of the needs mentioned by survey respondents: group homes, expanded probation counseling services, volunteer counseling programs, and professional mental health services. Budget estimates were constructed on the basis of information obtained from more than 20 agency personnel in the ETDD area. (The original information assembled was oriented to 1975-76 price levels. However, to reflect late 1970's conditions, these figures have been arbitrarily inflated 15% in the budgets presented here.)

When thinking about the costs of decentralized juvenile services, it is useful to bear in mind the concept of **economies of size.** This is the frequent reality that costs per client may become lower as the size (or geographic scope) of a service or facility increases. The efficiencies may stem from such elements as fuller use of specialized

facilities or personnel, quantity purchase discounts, and lower administrative overhead per case. In general, services that have a high ratio of fixed costs to variable costs will tend to be relatively inefficient when handled on a small scale.

On the other hand, small rural localities may not always be at a cost disadvantage. Conceivably, a juvenile service could be so highly centralized or so large in geographic scope that inefficiencies arise from bureaucratic "red tape" or needs to travel to and from outlying counties. Costs of acquiring office space may also be higher in large centers. A rural locality may be able to create some savings by combining two or more juvenile services, sharing facilities, drawing heavily on volunteer help, or hiring out certain specialized needs on a per-case fee basis.

From the viewpoint of an individual locality or juvenile agency, total fixed and variable costs may not be relevant considerations. What count are the **added** (out-of-pocket) costs incurred by that locality or agency in connection with a proposed juvenile service. For example, a juvenile counselor to help the local court may not entail much added expense beyond his or her salary if use can be made of existing court office facilities. A group home may involve little local outlay if matching state or federal funds are available for such programs. On the other hand, state or national program planners who are concerned with broader social effects may need to take more cost components into account.

Costs and efficiency are not the only criteria for deciding where to locate juvenile services. There may be other, less tangible considerations—for example, the merits of locating facilities and staff where they can become an integral part of the community served and, on the other hand, the difficulties of getting professional specialists to live in small rural communities. Frequently, there will be "trade-offs" between cost and other considerations. The answer that is "best" will vary from one situation to another; it depends on the relative importance placed by leaders and officials on these economic and noneconomic factors.

Group Homes—Possible Savings from Multicounty Cooperation

Group homes are seen by many as a partial substitute for institutionalization of juveniles who need special supervision, counseling, or treatment. For the concept to be fully developed, it would be desirable for any one county to have access to more than one group home, to provide separate facilities for boys and girls as well as to afford specialized functions. Yet the typical rural county does not have enough problem cases to utilize fully a number of specialized group homes. This raises such questions as: How costly would it be for a rural county to operate a group home that is only partly

utilized? Would it be much more expensive than pooling operations with nearby counties?

Drawing on information from persons who had experience with group homes, we developed cost estimates for a hypothetical home that could handle up to 8 boys or girls at a time (24 a year, if each stayed 4 months on the average). Two situations were compared: 1) use at only half capacity (4 at a time), and 2) use at full capacity (such as might be achieved if two counties cooperated in running a group home).

As shown by the cost estimates in Figure 3, the largest cost items—salaries for house parents, house rent and operation, and support staff stipends—are quite fixed. Doubling the occupancy rate increases total annual cost by only 31%. For this assumed group home situation, by cooperating with one another, two neighboring rural counties might each save nearly $20,000 a year and reduce cost per client more than one-third.[14]

Substantial cost savings from multicounty cooperation would seem possible in such situations. Operating fairly large group homes in sizable towns may also have advantages of making it easier to employ qualified house parents and to have access to supportive counseling, educational, and recreational services. But decisionmakers would need to weigh these against possible disadvantages of multicounty group homes—among others, the facts that juveniles would be removed from their home community settings, that it may be difficult for relatives to visit them, and that (if consolidated into large dormitory-like facilities) there may be less personal interaction with house parents and counselors.

Expanded Probation Counseling Services—Where to Base?

The need for improved counseling services for youths with behavioral problems is another felt-need in rural areas. Such improvements may come about through expansion of state probation services, funding of such positions by local governments, and/or special federal/state grants to localities.

[14] While some component items differ, our total cost estimates seem in line with those developed later by the Tennessee Department of Correction for 10 proposed group homes in the state, each housing 10 to 12 juveniles. At 1975-76 price levels, the Department's estimated cost of operating a group home was about $59,000 a year, compared with our full-use 1975-76 estimate of $64,800. The Department's estimated cost per client per day in the group homes was $13.13. This compared against an estimated 1975-76 cost per client per day of $5.24 for foster home care and a cost in the $23 to $36 range for placements in state juvenile institutions. (Based on unpublished Tennessee Department of Correction budget request information for FY 1977-78.)

Figure 3. Group home operation: half-capacity vs. full-capacity use.

Alternative A: A county has its own group home, but only enough cases to keep it half full.

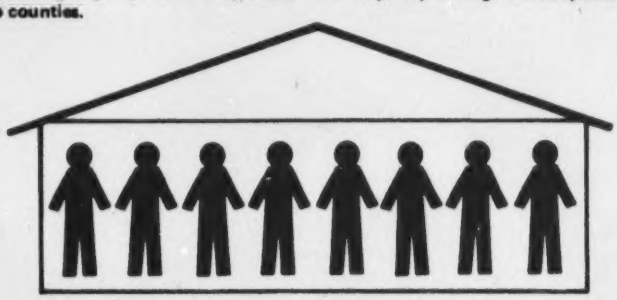
4 youths at a time . . . 4 months each . . . 12 total per year.	
House parents: 1 couple, plus half-time alternate (salary; fringe benefits; training)	$18,136
Basic house expenses (rent; utilities; insurance; equipment depreciation)	9,200
Direct care costs (food; clothing; transport; maintenance; allowances; medical & consultant fees; misc. supplies)	7,590
Support staff: counselor, ½ time; coordinator, ½ time; secretary, ½ time (salary and fringe benefits)	18,975
Support office operations (supplies; communications; travel; materials; etc.)	3,162
Total cost of the home per year	57,063
Total cost per county per year	57,063
Total cost per client per day	39

The question arises as to whether to provide these on a separate county-by-county basis, or to establish area offices which serve several counties. The juvenile populations of some rural counties may be too small to utilize fully even one counselor. And to maintain small offices in each county for juvenile counselors may not be very efficient. To place the counselors all together in an area office is a way to equalize loads and utilize staff more fully, thereby reducing total staff needs. But such centralization does entail more time and expense in travel to and from the counties served. It may also require a supervisor to coordinate activities.

We developed cost estimates for these two approaches, using an assumed case-load situation not unlike that of a six-county area within the East Tennessee Development District. For budgeting purposes it was assumed 1) that a counselor could handle up to 45 cases at a time if no more than 35 were active cases; 2) that it was not possible to hire a counselor on less than a full-time basis; 3) that it was possible to hire a secretary on either a half-time or a full-time basis; and 4) that relatively low-cost office

Figure 3 — (Continued).

Alternative B: A group home is operated at full capacity through the cooperation of two counties.



8 youths at a time . . . 4 months each . . . 24 total per year	
House parents: 1 couple, plus full-time alternate (salary; fringe benefits; training)	$23,932
Basic house expenses (rent; utilities; insurance; equipment depreciation)	9,200
Direct care costs (food; clothing; transport; maintenance; allowances; medical & consultant fees; misc. supplies)	14,548
Support staff: counselor, ¾ time; coordinator, ½ time; secretary, ½ time (salary and fringe benefits)	22,598
Support office operations (supplies; communications; travel; materials; etc.)	4,198
Total cost of the home per year	74,476
Total cost per county per year	37,238
Total cost per client per day	26

facilities could be obtained in outlying counties by housing counselors with existing agencies.

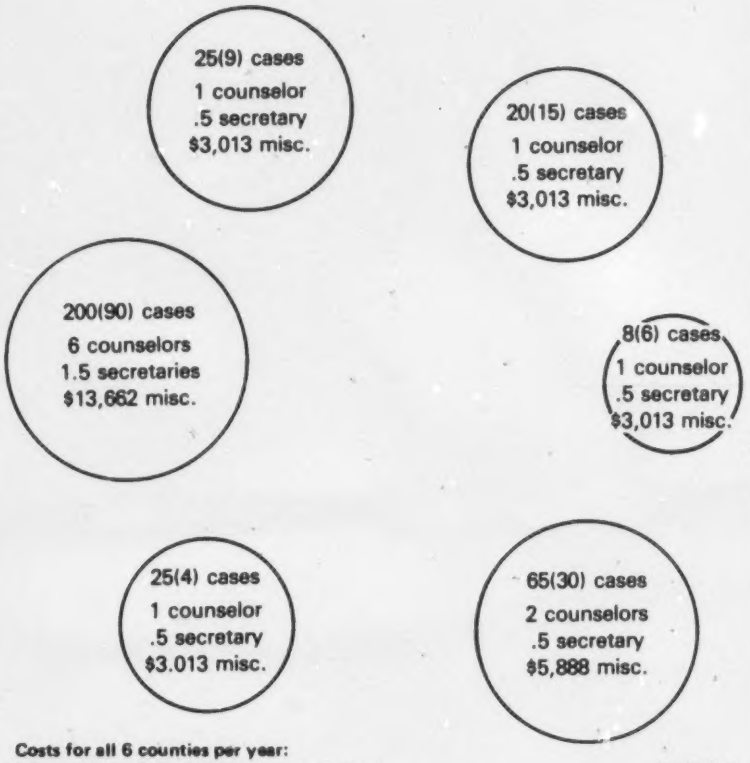
For this particular situation, the consolidated area-office approach was somewhat cheaper. Less than 8%, or $2,600 per year, would be saved in the average county. The pooled approach eliminated need for two counselors, 1.5 secretaries, and some office expenses. But partly offsetting these savings were needs for a supervisor, relatively high-rent facilities, and more travel (Figure 4).

In view of the modest cost differences, decisionmakers may want to place heavy weight on less tangible considerations. Some advantages of basing counselors in individual counties are: less counselor time tied up in travel; easier for juveniles and their families to reach the counselor when needed; fuller understanding of juveniles' homes and community environments is likely to be gained by the counselor; and the counselor can become a more integral and better accepted part of the local scene. On the other hand, being in an area office can make it easier for counselors to consult with one another or with specialists when dealing with difficult cases; to be more

Figure 4. Expanded juvenile probation services: individual vs. regional.

Alternative A: Each county has its own juvenile probation counselor.

(Numbers in parentheses refer to aftercare case loads in addition to active cases.)



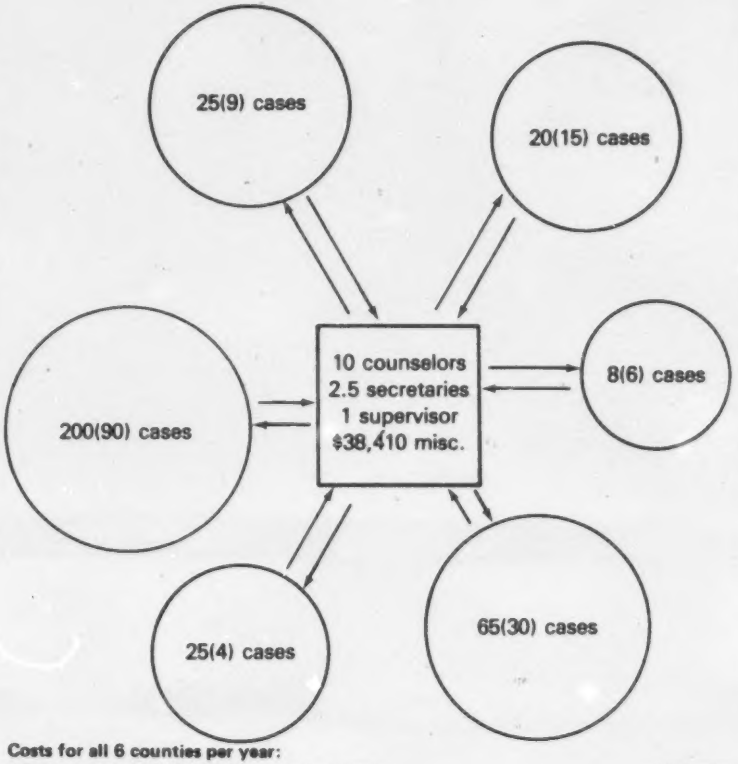
Costs for all 6 counties per year:

12 counselors @ $12,420 (salary + benefits)	$149,040
4.0 secretaries @ $8,280 (salary + benefits)	33,120
Misc. costs (office rent, $17,526; communications, $6,072; travel, $6,624; office expenses, $1,380)	31,602
Total	213,762
Average per county	35,627
Average per active case	632

consistent from one place to another in handling similar cases; to attract competent personnel who are not keen on living in small county seats; and to help new inexperienced counselors get started.[15]

Figure 4 — (Continued).

Alternative B: The six counties are served by juvenile probation counselors based in a regional office.



Costs for all 6 counties per year:

10 counselors @ $12,420 (salary + benefits)	$124,200
2.5 secretaries @ $8,280 (salary + benefits)	20,700
1 supervisor @ $14,490 (salary + benefits)	14,490
Misc. costs (office rent, $22,080; communications, $5,520; travel, $9,660; office expenses, $1,150)	38,410
Total	197,800
Average per county	32,967
Average per active case	577

[15] A third approach that might be considered is a combination in which professional probation counselors at the area level are augmented by semi-professional "youth service officers" located in the counties. These local aides can help in several ways, such as assembling pretrial background information for the juvenile judges, exploring ways to resolve individual delinquency problems, and reinforcing rehabilitation efforts. In fact, several ETDD counties have since 1975 added youth service officers to local court staffs with the help of newly available Federal funds.

Volunteer Youth Counseling—Local vs. Area Coordination

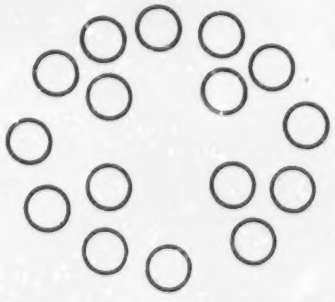
Expansion of volunteer counseling programs into rural areas is another idea that appealed to respondents in our survey. It was felt that interested local adults could provide valuable yet low-cost help to both delinquent and predelinquent youths by serving as role models, counselors, tutors, and friends. It was felt also that such volunteer programs could be a way to generate more interest and involvement of community leaders in juvenile needs.

A volunteer program does entail some expense—mainly 1) a paid coordinator to explain, establish, and organize the undertaking and 2) the resource persons and materials used for training the volunteers. This coordination and training could be handled on either an individual county basis or at a multicounty level.

We examined these two organizational options, using a hypothetical 16-county situation. Under the decentralized alternative, each of the 16 counties would have a part-time coordinator who operated out of his or her home for a nominal stipend and travel allowance. (Such coordinators would be semi-volunteers, motivated more by their concern for juveniles than for the money.) Under the centralized approach, in place of local coordinators there would be a full-time regional coordinator and a full-time secretary in an office serving all 16 counties. It was felt that the regional approach would entail con-

Figure 5. Volunteer juvenile counseling: separate county vs. regional programs.

Alternative A: Independent volunteer programs are in each of 16 counties.



1 part-time program coordinator for each county ($1,987 each per year for salary, fringe benefits, and travel)	$31,792
Communications ($276 each county per year)	4,416
Periodic training of volunteers by special team	460
Total 16-county cost per year	36,668
Average cost per county per year	2,292

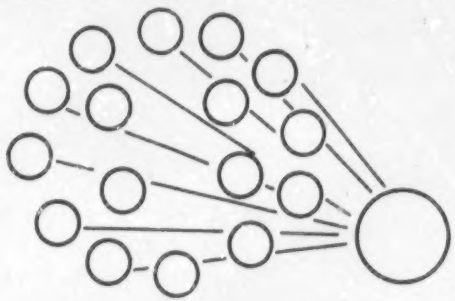
siderable travel back and forth to the individual counties, whereas the localized approach would require a great deal of expense for telephone calls and other communications to arrange for training, consult with juvenile specialists at area centers, etc. It was assumed that similar training arrangements would be made under both alternatives—6-hour programs held every 3 months for each cluster of 4 counties.

Calculations showed the regional-coordinator approach to be 25% cheaper than the individual-county approach (Figure 5). This savings amounted to only $566 per county per year, but could be significant if the funds were to come from local donations.

But there are important intangibles to be weighed too. The regional coordinator would be more likely to have some professional qualifications, would have readier access to specialized counseling and training resources at area and state levels, and could facilitate useful sharing of ideas and experiences among counties. The decentralized approach has important merits in that the local coordinators would be in closer touch with county human service workers, would be in more regular contact with the volunteer counselors, and could more readily generate volunteer and leadership interest through personal and community ties. Here again, perhaps a blended approach could be considered whereby there would be part-time coordinators at both local and regional levels.

Figure 5 — (Continued).

Alternative B: The county volunteer programs are coordinated from the regional level.



1 full-time regional program coordinator (salary, fringe benefits, and travel)	$15,939
1 full-time secretary for regional office (salary and fringe benefits	8,280
Communication	690
Office rent and misc. expenses	2,254
Periodic training of volunteers by special team	460
Total 16-county cost per year	27,623
Average cost per county per year	1,726

Professional Counseling Services—Three Possible Levels

A fourth felt-need was improved professional help for juveniles with mental health and family relations problems, with such specialized services being made available in or near rural counties if at all possible. We developed cost estimates for three gradients of professional counseling that conceivably could receive public support or partial subsidy in the future: **Level A,** a Master's-level counselor in the county who could deal with basic mental health and family relations problems; **Level B,** a contract with a specialized service which could provide basic- and intermediate-level help through frequent local visits; **Level C,** an arrangement with a regional mental health center to provide basic counseling as well as Ph.D.- and M.D.-level specialist help through appointments at a locally maintained office.

The budgeted estimates in Figure 6 are geared to an assumed county situation of 180 juvenile cases a year—a basic load of about 20 individual or family visits a week, with the average client making one visit a week for 5 weeks. For this situation, a 15% cost increase would be associated with upgrading from basic to intermediate counseling services, and another 18% increase associated with further upgrading to handle serious mental health problems.

How far to go in providing such professional services revolves around such considerations as: the amount of public or contributed funds available . . . the extent to which there are other pressing human needs . . . the extent to which other specialized counseling services are locally available . . . the ability of local families to pay for part or all of the services individually needed . . . the degree of public concern about the mental health and family relations of local youth.

A rural county could consider other ways to provide any one level of professional counseling to its young people. For example, two or more counties might go together in hiring an intermediate level counselor, rather than contracting out to an independent service. Travel costs and fees might be subsidized to enable needy persons to receive comprehensive help at centers outside the county, rather than by maintaining a local satellite office. Mental health services for delinquents could be meshed with professional counseling services in the local school system or with mental health programs for adults.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Though one has to be careful not to make broad generalizations from the results of this exploratory study in a small geographic area, the following might be highlighted as at least hypotheses that deserve further examination by concerned persons in other localities and at state and national levels:

Figure 6. Specialized mental health counseling services for youth: three gradients and forms.

Alternative A: A county has its own counselor to provide basic mental health services to local youth with problems (180 cases per year).	
1 counselor with Master's degree (salary and benefits)	$15,456
1 secretary (salary and benefits)	7,728
Office rent, utilities, equipment, and supplies	2,530
Communications	920
Travel (home visits, trips to regional centers, etc.)	575
Total cost for 180 juvenile cases per year	27,209
Average cost per case	151

Alternative B: The county contracts with a specialized agency to provide basic mental health counseling plus some related services for local youth with problems.	
Contracted costs of Master's-level counseling, plus some supportive helps, to 180 juvenile cases per year (based on pre-arranged hourly rates for services provided)	$29,900
Rental of office space for use by contract counselors when in the county	1,380
Total cost for 180 juvenile cases per year	31,280
Average cost per case	174

Alternative C: The county arranges for a multi-county mental health center to provide youth with basic and comprehensive help, operating through a local satellite office.	
Services of Master's-level counselors able to deal with basic and intermediate problems 3 days per week	$10,138
Services of psychologist with Ph.D., 1 day per week	4,844
Services of specialist with M.D. (plus registered nurse to assist), a day per month	2,713
Secretary to handle satellite office (salary and benefits)	8,114
Satellite office rent, utilities, equipment, supplies	4,025
Communications	1,380
Travel (mainly between regional center and county)	5,750
Total cost for 180 juvenile cases per year	36,964
Average cost per case	205

1. It is important in any discussion of "juvenile delinquency" to clarify what it means. Our survey disclosed that there is no common definition among local and regional officials. Many would include status offenders; many others would not. There were major differences also as to whether youth who commit only minor infractions (misdeameanors) would be considered delinquents. Some regarded delinquency as a less legalistic concept related to behavioral problems of adjustment to society and family situations.

This suggests the need to have a clear concept of "juvenile delinquency" in legislative and administrative actions, education

programs, and research reports. Especially crucial is the need to define terms sharply and consistently in instructions related to the collection and analysis of data related to delinquency. This does not necessarily mean that there has to be an "official" definition which everyone uses all the time; usage of the term may well vary, according to the particular context.

2. **There is genuine concern about the increases in delinquency in rural areas, and strong interest in constructive solutions.** Our survey responses provided the impressions that there is among judicial and law-enforcement officials in outlying counties a) awareness that delinquency rates are growing (among younger juveniles especially); b) a feeling that existing resources and ways of handling delinquency problems are not adequate; c) recognition that many juvenile behavior problems stem from home environments; and d) a desire to find constructive ways to help juveniles overcome behavioral problems or to help them from getting into trouble in the first place. Especially for first offenders and less serious cases, there seems to be little real desire for punitive treatment or placement in institutions if more constructive approaches and adequate funding can be found.

3. **Helping juveniles in or near their home setting is much preferred to sending them away.** Considerable use was being made by the rural East Tennessee counties of state processing and correctional institutions. But indications were that this was often because professional services and temporary placement facilities for youths who could not cope with their home surroundings were not locally available. There was concern about the negative effects that impersonal programs at large institutions could have. County workers and officials were interested in localized services for juveniles—professional counseling, probation services, temporary detention and placement facilities, and recreational facilities especially. Though recognized as not always economically feasible, providing such services at individual county levels (or for small clusters of adjacent counties) was in general preferred over district-wide approaches. To some extent, these preferences for decentralized services may reflect worries about losing local autonomy.

4. **Funding is not the only obstacle to improvements in local juvenile services. Understanding, involvement, and legitimization are important too.** Lack of funds was most often mentioned by our survey respondents as a major impediment to improving juvenile services. Abilities of rural localities to finance new facilities or professional help are indeed limited. But there was evidence that, even if funding could be arranged, success in upgrading these services would not be automatic. Some initiatives at area and state levels (such as the new regional diagnostic and detention center) were not

being received entirely with enthusiasm in outlying counties. It appears that fuller understanding of such proposals and the motives underlying them, more local leadership involvement at early planning stages, and endorsement by key influentials would have helped. Such aspects of program acceptance may be especially important in small localities, where contact with professional expertise is not frequent, attitudes may be swung in one direction or another by just a few influential persons, and the involvement of volunteers and key leaders may be essential.

5. **Decentralization of some juvenile services seems feasible, but cooperation among rural counties would be needed.** Our preliminary cost calculations suggest a mixed picture about the feasibility of locating juvenile services in or near rural counties with small populations. A group home would entail a high portion of fixed costs; to operate on a single-county basis at less than full capacity would be expensive. Likewise, comprehensive mental health counseling for juveniles would not appear to be cost-efficient unless at least three or four neighboring counties join together. On the other hand, under the assumptions we made, providing juvenile probation counseling services from a regional office that serves several counties would not be much cheaper than locating a separate counselor in each county.

6. **To generalize about the "best" degree of decentralization could be misleading.** Any series of cost estimates reflects a particular setting and set of assumptions. What is most efficient for one situation may not be most efficient elsewhere. Salary levels, rental rates, and other cost items may differ. What can be provided free in one situation (e.g., office space and secretarial help) may be an out-of-pocket cost in another. Variations in the dominant types of problems and treatment needs may lead to additional cost differences.

Moreover, **intangible** differences related to the quality, convenience, and side-effects of services need to be weighed against their cost advantages or disadvantages. Our analysis demonstrated that it is difficult to compare costs of centralized and decentralized alternatives on an "all other things equal" basis. In the minds of some people at least, such intangibles may be very important and outweigh cost considerations.

7. **Local workers and officials feel a need for more information and training.** Until recently at least, it has not been common for human service workers, law enforcement personnel, or court officials in nonmetropolitan East Tennessee to have specialized knowledge about delinquency problems and programs. But our survey did disclose real interest on the part of many in learning more and in having readier access to available expertise. These felt-needs included desires for: a) training to help local personnel and volunteers to understand

delinquent behavior, its solutions, and the legal aspects; b) convenient access to professional specialists who could suggest how to deal with difficult cases; c) better communication with other localities and agencies about youth programs being developed and collaboration possibilities; and d) more information from regional, state, and national sources about possible avenues of funding and technical assistance.

Training and information approaches that have worked in cities may not fit rural situations. For example, frequent meetings in a central place can be time-consuming and costly for those who have to come from outlying counties. Also, dealing only part-time with juvenile problems as they often do, rural workers are less likely than their urban counterparts to have been exposed to new ideas through professional affiliations. One answer could be special newsletters aimed at these groups. Another could be effort to reach rural officials through meetings that they normally attend, such as sheriffs' or judges' associational gatherings.

There is need and opportunity for "upward" information flow too. As brought out in the survey, local officials and agency personnel have valuable insights to offer about delinquency patterns, causes, and problems associated with proposed solutions. An important byproduct of training and information-sharing programs could be feedback of such insights to regional, state, and federal agencies.

8. **Better facts about delinquency patterns and program costs are needed.** The planning of juvenile facilities and services localized information about the magnitude and nature of delinquency problems, disposition of cases, adequacy of present facilities, and trends. Effective planning depends also on sound estimates of the costs and performance of new program proposals, based as much as possible on actual experience.

We found it difficult to construct a very complete picture of delinquency patterns and treatment for East Tennessee on the basis of secondary data. Such information is very hard for local and state agencies to collect, and figures are often incomplete. Partly as an outgrowth of data needs for assistance under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, more attention is now being given by state and federal agencies to improvement of statistics related to juvenile justice. In doing so, it is to be hoped that planners and statisticians will be mindful of the problems that rural counties with limited staffs are likely to have in keeping detailed records and making elaborate reports. Perhaps design and testing of workable juvenile data systems is an area of research that some universities could productively tackle.

Similarly, the general accounts that institutions and agencies

usually keep are not adequate for providing cost estimates for specific juvenile program components. Here again, research which seeks to develop better cost information for decision-making purposes—especially information related to innovative delinquency prevention and treatment ideas—would seem fruitful. As this study has suggested, systematic analysis of the alternative possibilities can have much to do with how wisely funds for improving juvenile services in rural areas are spent. Reliable cost estimates are an important part of such analysis.

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